

# OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**JOB CENTER** 

# INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS RESPONSE PLAN

# A NOTE TO ALL READERS

The health and safety of all who enter Missouri's job centers is our number one priority. This Infectious Disease Preparedness Response Plan (Plan) represents the Office of Workforce Development's (OWD) required practices to safely serve Missouri's customers while ensuring the safety of OWD and partner staff.

This Plan is to be used as a job center best practice guideline. It aligns with Centers for Disease Control and Missouri Department of Health and Human Services recommendations to the greatest extent possible.

This is a working document that will be updated to reflect changes in directives and introduce new recommended practices as they become available. It is intended to support the job center staff and to provide information and instruction for all who enter Missouri's job centers to keep them and others safe.

In this Plan you will find a list of required facility modifications, instructions on changes to behaviors to ensure social distancing, cleaning standards to be implemented, and a playbook for challenging situations with customers and managing staff illness in the workplace.

OWD understands that each of Missouri's job centers is unique and a one-sized fits all approach is not sufficient. This Plan provides facility modification guidelines that OWD staff and facilities workers will use to customize each job center to provide a safe environment to serve Missourians. The social distancing modifications required in this Plan are not negotiable and must be followed by all OWD and partner staff. However, staff are welcome to request an accommodation through their human resources representative for any social modifications that are not possible for that staff member.

Each OWD and partner staff team member plays an important and critical role in maintaining the health and safety of the job center. Your compliance with this Plan will ensure the safety of your fellow coworkers and the members of the public who need our critical services during these times of unprecedented unemployment.

Serving Missourians during these challenging times is more important than ever before. Thank you for your dedication to helping Missourians skill up and get back to work in the safest manner possible.

Stay safe.

Mardy Leathers, DMgt

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# **FACILITY MODIFICATIONS**

## SECTION 1 - What OWD Has Implemented to Get the Job Centers Ready to Reopen

While the job centers were closed, OWD took the following actions to get all job centers owned or leased by the State of Missouri Office of Administration modified to safely serve customers. These modifications include:

- ✓ Moved office and cubicle spaces to ensure no staff are working in adjoining cubicles with low walls;
- ✓ Moved office and cubicle spaces to ensure there is at least 6 feet between work spaces or added Plexiglas between workspaces;
- ✓ Marked the floors at the entry and throughout the job center when practical for that specific job center to ensure 6 feet of distance between individuals at all times;
- ✓ Purchased and installed Plexiglas at the front check-in counter;
- ✓ Moved chairs in any waiting areas to ensure 6 feet of space between each chair;
- ✓ Established a space for meeting with clients that ensures 6 feet of distance between customer and staff and/or ensures Plexiglas between the customer and staff, depending on the layout and available space in each job center;
- ✓ Modified the resource centers to ensure 6 feet of distance between computers and/or placed plexiglass shields between the computers, as appropriate for each job center;
- ✓ Ensured appropriate handwashing signage in bathrooms and kitchen areas;
- ✓ Placed touch-free trash cans throughout the job center;
- $\checkmark$  Closed the training rooms to staff and customers as appropriate in each job center;
- ✓ Removed some kitchen equipment like shared coffee pots to minimize the opportunity to spread germs;
- ✓ Closed water fountains;
- ✓ Calculated a maximum occupancy of 120 square feet per person for each job center to ensure no more than the allowed number of staff and customers are in the job center at a time;
- ✓ Secured hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies for each job center.
- ✓ Placed signage on front doors asking people with symptoms not to enter and indicating that the facility is for customers only and there is no public bathroom.

# **SECTION 2 – Daily Facility Modifications Staff Must Implement**

Each day in the job center, there are a few facility modifications that staff must make to ensure the health and safety of staff and customers. Please ensure the following occur each day:

- ✓ Prop open all doors that can safely be propped;
- $\checkmark$  Ensure there are cleaning supplies available at the front desk;
- ✓ Ensure markers on the floor are not removed or damaged;
- ✓ Ensure touch-free trash cans are located in appropriate areas for staff and customers to access easily as cleaning contractors may move them at night.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE JOB CENTER

#### **SECTION 1 – Maintaining Social Distance**

One of the most important tools in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 is to maintain 6 feet of distance from other people at all times. As a member of OWD and/or partner staff, it is your responsibility to ensure that you keep 6 feet away from your coworkers and customers at all times. To ensure everyone can keep 6 feet of distance from all other people, all staff should do the following:

- ✓ Abide by all floor markings indicating 6 foot spacing requirements;
- √ Follow all directional signage to prevent crowding hallways;
- ✓ Avoid entering a hallway with someone else if you cannot maintain 6 feet of distance;
- ✓ Never enter another employee's workspace;
- ✓ Never meet with a customer without plexiglass or 6 feet of distance between you;
- ✓ OWD prefers that job center staff never conduct meetings with staff in-person, but always speak over the phone or virtually. However, to the extent an in-person meeting is required, follow all social distancing requirements and obtain supervisor approval before holding the meeting;
- ✓ Don't touch any other employee's office equipment;
- ✓ Avoid crowding common spaces like kitchens, water coolers, and bathrooms. Staff must maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and the person using the common space;
- ✓ Never eat in the break room, all meals must be consumed at the employee's workspace;
- ✓ Avoid crowding file cabinets, printers, or other spaces with shared equipment or files. Staff must maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and the person using the equipment.

# **SECTION 2 – PPE Usage**

All staff must wear the OWD-provided reusable mask, or their own work-appropriate reusable or disposable mask, at all times when moving around within the job center. Any time a staff person leaves their desk they must wear a mask. However, the front desk worker must wear a mask at their desk whenever a customer is at the front desk.

All staff will be provided with two reusable masks. Staff must clean and care for their reusable masks according to the manufacturer's instructions. Staff are expected to wear their mask in accordance with CDC guidelines, covering the mouth and nose.

\*OWD recognizes that some individuals are not able to wear masks for personal medical reasons. OWD staff should contact their human resources representative if they believe they are unable to wear the employer-provided reusable mask.

OWD provided virtual training to all job center employees on the appropriate usage of PPE. Employees are expected to implement all information provided in the training.

# **SECTION 3 – Cleaning Standards**

All staff play a critical role in ensuring cleaning protocols are followed throughout the work day. This work ensures that the job center remains a safe place for customers and staff.

When implementing the following cleaning standards, please be respectful of individuals with chemical sensitivities. Spray cleaners should not be used in job centers with employees with chemical sensitivities. In these situations, use only sanitizing wipes.

## **Hand Washing**

Frequent and thorough handwashing is the single most important behavior to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. All staff are expected to wash their hands according to CDC guidance with water and soap for 20 seconds, or use provided hand sanitizer, when:

- ✓ Arriving to work;
- √ After meeting with a customer;
- ✓ Before using the kitchen/break room area;
- √ After using the restroom;
- √ After eating;
- ✓ After touching a frequently touched surface such as a door handle, microwave handle, or refrigerator handle.

#### Individual Surface Disinfection

To be clear, the cleaning contractor for each facility is providing extra sanitization each evening, but each staff member is responsible for cleaning, with provided sanitizing wipes or spray, the following surfaces:

- ✓ Their workspace as necessary throughout the day and at the end of the day before leaving;
- ✓ Customer meeting space after meeting with a customer;
- ✓ Employee meeting space after meeting with a customer;
- ✓ All pens, scanners, and any other supplies or equipment after touched by a customer;
- ✓ The microwave and refrigerator handles before and after use;
- ✓ Any other surfaces in the break room that the employee touches such as knobs, faucets, and drawer pulls.

# <u>Special Duty Disinfection – Frequently Touched Surfaces</u>

Each job center must designate one or more individuals to sanitize with wipes or spray the following frequently touched surfaces twice a day, once mid-morning and once mid-afternoon:

- √ Handrails;
- ✓ Door handles/knobs;
- √ Bathroom door and stall latches;
- √ Check-in counter:
- ✓ Other frequently touched surfaces as determined by the unique job center.

# <u>Special Duty Disinfection – Resource Computers & Customer Phone</u>

Each job center must designate one or more individuals to monitor usage of the resource center computers and clean the mouse, keyboard, screen, and surrounding desk area of the resource computer after each customer use.

Each job center must also designate one or more individuals to monitor usage of the customer phone and clean the phone after each customer use.

This cleaning must be complete before allowing another customer to use the computer or phone.

## Special Duty Disinfection - Check-In Kiosks

Each job center that uses check-in kiosks must designate one or more individuals to monitor usage of the check-in kiosks and clean the check-in kiosk with a sanitizing wipe after each customer use.

This cleaning must be complete before allowing another customer to use the kiosk.

#### **SECTION 4 – CHILDREN IN THE JOB CENTER**

Frequently, customers bring their children with them to the job center. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic children should not be allowed to run freely in the job center. Children must stay within arm's reach of their parent or guardian who brought them to the job center.

All job centers with designated children's areas must close those areas and remove all tables, chairs, toys, coloring books, etc., available for the use of children.

In the event that a child is running freely within the job center, staff should politely remind the parent or guardian that the child must remain within their arm's reach due to the pandemic.

# CHANGES TO CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

## **SECTION 1 – Welcoming Customers**

While maintaining 6 feet of distance, staff must ensure customers maintain 6 feet of distance between each other when waiting to check into the job center to receive services.

When greeting a customer at the welcome desk, if the customer presents without their own mask, offer the customer one of the disposable masks available at the front desk.

Next, the person staffing the welcome desk must ask the customer the following questions:

- 1. Have you or a person you live with experienced one or more of the following in the last 48 hours: fever, chills, new loss of taste or smell, unexplained body aches, headache, sore throat, dry non-productive cough that is either new or worsening if chronic, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea?;
- 2. Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact, meaning within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, with a person known to have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or with anyone who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
- 3. Are you, or any person you live with, currently under a quarantine or isolation order from a local public health authority?
- 4. Are you, or any person you live with, currently awaiting a COVID-19 test result?

If the answer to any of these questions is YES, please provide the customer with the phone number to receive services over the phone and ask the customer to return after their symptoms resolve.

NOTE: If the customer becomes disgruntled, please see the next section for tips on dealing with difficult situations.

If the answer to these questions is NO, continue to the process of checking customers in using the available kiosk or manual process, as applicable. All customers must be checked in at the front desk to ensure adequate records are available in case contact tracers need the records in the future.

## **SECTION 2 – Meeting with Customers**

After determining what service(s) the customer needs, please direct the customer to the appropriate area. It is critical that customers stay in the designated customer area(s).

When serving customers please remember the following:

- ✓ Do not take customers into offices or cubes that are not designated and prepared as customer meeting spaces. Always meet with customers in designated meeting spaces;
- ✓ Always maintain 6 feet of distance away from customers;
- ✓ When available, always meet with customers using a plexiglass partition. Otherwise, maintain 6 feet of distance during the meeting;
- ✓ Do not retain any paper documents from customers. Instead ask customers to scan paper documents in, or scan them in on behalf of the customer and retain electronic versions.

## **SECTION 3 – Assisting Customers at the Resource Computers**

Staff must maintain 6 feet of distance from customers at all times. To assist a customer at a resource computer, use an OWD-provided laser pointer or other device to show customers where to click on a computer.

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# HANDLING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

During these unprecedented times, it is inevitable that job center staff will face challenging situations with customers and with our own staff. The following is a list of possible issues that may arise based on feedback received through the OWD employee question and comment portal as well as through supervisors. This list is not exhaustive of all potential situations. Always remember to call the police if you feel your safety is threatened.

#### SECTION 1 - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NOT SEEKING SERVICES

OWD understands that in many job centers, individuals use the job center as a place to sit in air conditioning during the summer or as a place to use the restroom, but do not want services. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals should not be allowed to use the job center facilities unless they are present to receive services.

To protect the public health and safety, all job centers should have signage on the door that the facility and restroom are for customers only. If individuals enter the job center seeking only to sit in the waiting room or use the restroom they should be asked to leave if not seeking services. If the individual becomes disgruntled, please follow the directions below for angry customers.

#### **SECTION 2 - MANAGING SICK CUSTOMERS**

What if a customer responds "yes" to any of the illness screening questions at the check-in desk?

If a customer responds that they have COVID-19 related symptoms, kindly advise the customer that to ensure the safety of the job center customers and staff, individuals with symptoms are to receive services over the phone until they are symptom free. Provide the customer with the phone number to receive services and ask that the customer leave the center and call the number for services.

It is important to stress to the customer that we are not denying services, but are providing services over the phone instead of in person for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms.

What if a customer exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while receiving services in the job center?

This is inherently a tricky situation and staff must use good judgment when determining how to proceed.

Please remember that the only visible symptom of COVID-19 is a dry cough. If a customer is exhibiting a persistent dry cough, it may be necessary to ask the person to leave the job center to protect the public health and safety and offer to provide the services over the phone until the symptoms cease. Staff should work with their supervisor to determine the appropriate course of action. Staff should never refuse to provide services, but should offer the services over the phone or virtually for the impacted individual.

NOTE – it is critically important that this guidance is not used in any discriminatory manner. The decision to ask a customer to leave and receive services over the phone should NEVER be based on any discriminatory factor. When in doubt, consult with your supervisor.

What if a customer says they are recovered from COVID-19?

If a customer indicates that they previously had COVID-19 but are recovered, staff should proceed to provide services as outlined in this Plan.

#### **SECTION 3 - CUSTOMER MASK USAGE**

Customers are required to wear masks in the job center. If a customer presents without a mask, offer a disposable mask. If a customer refuses to wear a mask, staff should ask the customer to leave and receive services over the phone or virtually.

All job centers must display signage that masks are required.

#### **SECTION 4 - DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS**

During this time of unprecedented unemployment, OWD staff have experienced increased levels of anger from customers. Customers are frustrated by the unemployment system and their own life circumstances, and are directing that anger to staff over the phone. All job center staff have expressed concern with the possibility that once the job centers are open to the public, customers may become angry inside the job center.

This Plan does not replace de-escalation training. OWD staff have resources available through MOLearning to learn de-escalation techniques. OWD staff are encouraged to review those resources.

The following is a list of situations that may arise. The first, and most important, point to remember is that if at any time you feel that your safety is threatened, call the police.

What if a customer threatens to harm a staff member or the job center?

Immediately call the police.

If you feel comfortable, ask the customer to leave the job center. If your center has security staff, alert the security staff to the individual and ask the security staff to escort the individual out of the job center.

After the incident is over, file a detailed incident report with OWD central office.

What if a customer becomes angry and verbally abusive toward staff?

If a customer becomes verbally abusive and angry, the staff member assisting the customer should remove themselves from the situation and a supervisor should step in to assist the customer. The supervisor should advise the individual that if their tone and/or language does not change, the customer will be asked to leave.

If the customer's behavior does not improve, ask the customer to leave and receive services over the phone.

If the customer's behavior becomes threatening, phone the police and follow the steps outlined in the section above.

After the incident is over, file a detailed incident report with OWD central office.

#### What if a customer threatens to hurt himself?

If a customer threatens to hurt herself, staff should redirect the customer back to the task at hand and attempt to provide the needed service.

If the staff member believes the threat to be credible, OWD staff have previously asked the local police to do a well-check on the individual using the address provided in jobs.mo.gov for the individual.

Staff should work with their supervisor to determine the appropriate response to the situation.

## What if a customer becomes physically violent?

If a customer becomes physically violent, all staff should immediately move to a safe location, even if that means leaving the individual alone in the job center.

Once in a place of safety, call the police.

Do not try to engage physically with the customer.

After the incident is over, file a detailed incident report with OWD central office.

# **COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE**

#### **SECTION 1 – MANAGING YOUR OWN HEALTH**

It is critical right now that staff take extra care of themselves to ensure their safety and the safety of their coworkers. The most important step you can take to prevent the spread of illness is to stay home if you do not feel well. Staff who develop a dry cough, sudden loss of taste or smell, fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, or other COVID-19 symptoms should not report to work and should contact their supervisor.

Beyond that instruction, staff are encouraged to take their temperature each day before coming to work. If your temperature is 100.4 degrees or higher, stay home and contact your physician and supervisor.

OWD staff experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will not be allowed to return to work in the job center until authorized by their supervisor and human resources coordinator. Partner staff should follow a similar protocol.

Staff will not be penalized for calling in sick, even if the staff does not have leave to cover the absence.

Finally, mental health is more important than ever during this difficult time. If you are concerned about your mental health, OWD staff are encouraged to use the free Strive Employee Life and Family resource.

#### **SECTION 2 – MANAGING SICK STAFF**

What if a staff member tests positive for covid-19?

If a staff member of a job center tests positive for COVID-19 in a state owned or leased facility, the job center will close until a specialized cleaning of the facility is completed by the State of Missouri Office of Administration. Staff will work remotely to the extent possible during the closure of the job center. Staff unable to work remotely will be given administrative leave. Staff should take home their work laptops each day in order to be prepared to work remotely if notified the job center is closed. Staff may return to the job center after completion of the specialized cleaning.

The staff member with the positive test result may return to work after the following three criteria are met:

- 1. After 10 days have passed since symptoms began, and
- 2. 24 hours have passed with no fever without using fever-reducing medications, and
- 3. Other COVID-19 symptoms are improving (according to the CDC, loss of taste or smell may persist for weeks or months after resolution of other symptoms and should not delay a return to work).

## What if a staff member suspects they have covid-19?

In the event that a staff member develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and has been working in a job center, the staff member must not return to the job center until confirmation of a negative test, or after the three CDC criteria for return to work outlined above are met.

#### What if a staff member has contact with a sick person?

If at any time a staff member has a household member who tests positive for COVID-19, that staff member must not return to work until after a 14-day quarantine after the sick individual is released from isolation by their physician or local public health authority, or after 14 days after the last date of exposure, whichever is appropriate.

If at any time a staff member has a household member that is experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms but is not yet tested, or is intending to get tested, that staff member must not return to work until the sick individual tests negative. If the sick individual tests positive, follow the guidance directly above.

If at any time a staff member is contacted by a health department and notified that they were exposed to an individual who has tested positive, that employee must stay at home for 14 days before returning to the workplace. If the staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms, the staff member must work with their Human Resources Coordinator to determine the appropriate course of action.

If an employee is a "close contact" of another individual who tested positive for COVID-19, whether notified by a health department or the individual with the positive test result, the employee must not return to work until after a 14-day quarantine. If the staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms, the staff member must work with their Human Resources Coordinator to determine the appropriate return to work date. For purposes of this IDPRP, "close contact" is defined as someone who you were within 6 feet of for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period regardless of face covering, or someone you kissed, shared eating utensils with or someone who coughed or sneezed on you, within 48 hours before the COVID-19 symptoms began or within 48 hours before the individual received a positive test result.

The CDC and local health departments are now advising that individuals who have already contracted COVID-19 likely have immunity to the virus and are not able to spread the virus for 90 days after contracting and recovering from COVID-19. In the event that an employee who has already contracted COVID-19 experiences a new exposure within the 90 day immunity period, that employee may report to their work location after receiving written approval from their local health department and their Human Resources representative. Contact your Human Resources representative immediately upon learning of the exposure and do not return to your worksite until instructed to do so by your Human Resources representative.

In the event an employee is fully vaccinated and the employee is a "close contact" of another individual who tested positive for COVID-19, the employee does NOT need to quarantine so long as the employee is not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

## What if a staff member notices a coworker with symptoms of covid-19?

If a staff member reports to the job center and other staff notice the employee exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms such as a dry persistent cough, the staff member should notify their supervisor.

In the event the staff with symptoms is an OWD staff member, the supervisor should work with their human resources coordinator to determine the appropriate course of action before confronting the employee about the symptoms.

In the event the staff with symptoms is a Partner staff member, the employee's supervisor should work with the employer to manage the situation.

In all circumstances, if management and human resources determines it is necessary to question the symptomatic employee, the supervisor should ask the employee if they are feeling ok and state that staff noticed a cough or other symptoms. If the employee has no other explanation for the cough such as allergies, the employee should be sent home. However, if an employee has another explanation for the symptoms, such as allergies or another medical condition, staff should not pursue the matter further.

What if the job center is notified through contact tracing that a customer was in the job center who has since tested positive?

In the event that a job center is notified through contact tracing that a customer was in the state owned or leased job center previously and has since tested positive for COVID-19, the job center will close until the Office of Administration completes a specialized cleaning of the job center. Job center staff will work remotely to the extent possible until completion of the specialized cleaning. After completion of the cleaning, staff will return to the job center.

#### **SECTION 3 – REPORTING POTENTIAL AND/OR KNOWN ISSUES**

If job center staff become aware that they may have come into contact with someone with COVID-19, are contacted by a county health department regarding a possible exposure, receive a positive COVID-19 test, or begin experiencing COVID-19 symptoms the staff must immediately notify their supervisor and their HR coordinator of the issue.

The supervisor must notify Lisa Elrod and Mardy Leathers immediately upon learning of the issue.

The HR coordinator will work with the staff member, supervisor, and OWD leadership to determine the appropriate course of action.

# **QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS**

OWD's first priority is the safety of its staff. OWD welcomes all questions and comments as to how it can improve the safety and effectiveness of the job centers.

OWD staff can submit questions or concerns directly through the Staff Q&A on COVID-19 available on the intranet. OWD staff can also speak directly with their supervisors and human resources representatives.

Partner staff should submit their questions or comments to their supervisors who can report the information through the local board director to OWD central office.

#### **OWD COMMITMENTS**

OWD commits to doing everything it can to protect the health and safety of all job center employees. This is evident by the fact that OWD closed all job centers to the public on March 23, 2020, and since that time has taken every effort to move staff to remote work whenever possible.

OWD commits to continuing to do everything in its power to protect its employees, but OWD and partner staff must commit as well.

#### **STAFF COMMITMENTS**

OWD expects all OWD and partner staff to commit to using safe practices in the job centers. OWD expects that all staff will:

- Stay home if you feel sick;
- Practice social distancing;
- Wash your hands with soap and water and use hand sanitizer frequently;
- Wear an employer provided mask in the job center;
- Maintain a clean work area;
- Cough and sneeze into tissues or your elbow.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO SERVING MISSOURIANS DURING THIS TIME.